



Session update from Olympia

April 27, 2011

Special Session Begins

Governor Gregoire called the legislature back for a special session which started yesterday. The focus of the special session is to complete the final negotiations on the state budgets for the 2011/13 biennium and to pass the dozens of bills that are necessary to implement the budget due to their various fiscal impacts.

Under state law, a special session can last no more than 30 days but can be convened as quickly as the Legislature completes its remaining business.

The work left is three-fold:

- Any bills that failed to win passage through both chambers during the regular session now revert to their chamber of origin and must be passed again before they can be considered in the other chamber and sent to the governor to be signed into law.
- The Ways and Means committees in both the Senate and House must hold hearings on the remaining bills that fiscally impact the budgets.
- The Senate and House must reconcile the differences in their budget proposals and any policy bills that passed both chambers but with differing amendments.

An important part of this process will be continuing to engage the public as we work through the remainder of this process and try to resolve difficult unanswered questions and make tough choices. I hope you will stay in touch, and if you ever have any comments, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact my office](#).

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Transportation Budget Employs 30,000 Workers

The nearly \$9 billion transportation budget passed last week by the Legislature puts nearly 30,000 people to work for the next two years on projects promised in the 2003 and 2005 gas tax packages despite expectations of declining gas tax revenues.

[House Bill 1175](#) was a strongly bipartisan budget written jointly by the committee's two lead Democrats and two lead Republicans. Among other things, the budget maintains the \$99 million investment in transit and bike/pedestrian grant programs in the committee-passed version and expands on the earlier version passed in committee by extending the SR 167 HOT lanes pilot project.

The budget squeezes operational savings from numerous programs, including ferries, but manages to avoid the reductions in ferry service proposed earlier by the governor and the House. At the same time, the budget reduces WSF operating costs by more than \$30 million by reforming the collective bargaining rules, reducing service during off-peak hours, eliminating the Marine Employees Commission and moving to a more strategic marine insurance package for WSF vessels.

You can [see the full budget here](#).



Pictured Above: Governor Gregoire congratulates Senator Brown after signing SB 5449

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TRY YOUR HAND AT BALANCING THE BUDGET

Budget solutions are like opinions — everyone has one. Well, here's your chance to try out your ideas by clicking on our [budget calculator](#). You not only can choose which public services you'd cut, and by how much, but you can also see just much or how little savings those reductions provide — and how close they get you to balancing the budget.

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Governor Signs IT Piracy Prevention

My proposal, [Senate Bill 5449](#), which addresses IT piracy was signed by Governor Gregoire into law last week. This bill will tackle the piracy issue by encouraging Washington companies to stop contracting with firms who steal intellectual property, creating legal remedies for companies against competitors that steal their intellectual property, cleaning the supply chain of pirated information technology, and adding tens of thousands of jobs and billions in revenues to our state and national economy.

In Washington, information technology is a nearly \$14 billion industry supporting 1,500 companies and a workforce of 186,000 individuals – 50,000 in software alone. SB 5449 will make Washington ground zero in the reversal of the growing trend of foreign interests stealing American intellectual property.

Pirated information technology is illegal in the U.S., but there's no shortage of foreign suppliers eager to gain unfair economic advantage from intellectual property they have neither innovated nor invested in themselves. It's estimated that the rate of pirated information technology in China – our fastest-growing trade partner and competitor – is as high as 90 percent. This amounts to an 'innovation subsidy' of foreign companies with whom Americans and Washingtonians are competing for jobs.

Stay in Touch

As the special session moves forward, I will be in constant communication with you and providing updates along the way.

Sincerely,



Click [here](#) for contact information for my Olympia or Spokane office.

